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Message Text

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15
ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 DHA-02 ORM-02 PM-04 CIAE-00 DODE-00

INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 SP-02 /035 W
---------- 115626
R 010802Z OCT 76
FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4085

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 27297

FOLLOWING TELEGRAM SENT ACTION AMEMBASSY BANGKOK;
INFO AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE DATED OCT 1, REPEATED URSTA:

QUOTE
UDORN 6154

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PBOR, TH, LA
SUBJECT: STATUS OF MUKDAHAN BORDER OPENING

REF: (A) VIENTIANE 2238 (B) UDORN 6115

1. CHIEF IMMIGRATION OFFICER IN MUKDAHAN INFORMED CONSUL SEPTEMBER 29 THAT MUKDAHAN BORDER CROSSING HAS BEEN REOPENED BUT THAT LPDR OFFICIALS HAVE NOT YET COMPLETED ARRANGEMENTS FOR OPENING SAVANNAKHET SIDE OF BORDER. HE STATED THAT THAI AUTHORITIES REOPENED MUKDAHAN SEPTEMBER 23 FOLLOWING ARRIVAL OF OFFICIAL ORDER ISSUED BY DEP MIN MOI CHOOSA-NGA RITTKIPRASART, DATED SEPTEMBER 16. HE ADDED THAT LPDR OFFICIALS HAVE INDICATED TO HIM THAT THEY WILL BE READY TO REOPEN SAVANNAKHET ON OR ABOUT OCTOBER 6.

2. CHIEF IMMIGRATION OFFICER STATED FURTHER THAT ACCORDING TO HIS SOURCES OF INFORMATION ONE OF REASONS FOR DELAY ON LAO SIDE IS LPDR AUTHORITIES CONCERN REGARDING POSSIBLE LARGE NUMBER OF LAOTIANS WHO MAY ELECT TO REMAIN IN MUKDAHAN AFTER CROSSING MEKONG RIVER. HE SAID THAT IN ORDER TO DEAL WITH THIS PROBLEM LPDR OFFICIALS ARE REPORTEDLY CONSIDERING
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REQUIRING FAMILIES TO SIGN A PAPER STATING THAT IF FAMILY

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MEMBERS PERMITTED TO CROSS RIVER DO NOT RETURN FAMILIES WILL
BE SUBJECT TO HEAVY FINE OR IMPRISONMENT.

3. CHIEF IMMIGRATION OFFICER NOTED THAT MUKDAHAN BORDER
POINT IS OPEN FROM 0700 HRS TO 1700 HRS DAILY. HE ADDED THAT
TO OBTAIN A BORDER PASS FOR PASSAGE TO SAVANNAKHET AN IN-
DIVIDUAL MUST PRESENT PROOF OF THAI CITIZENSHIP AND BE
EITHER A BOAT OPERATOR OR LEGITIMATE TRADER OR HAVE FAMILY
MEMBER RESIDING IN SAVANNAKHET AREA. HE SAID RESIDENTS OF
NAKHON PHANOM (NKP) PROVINCE CAN OBTAIN BORDER PASSES AT
IMMIGRATION OFFICE IN MUKDAHAN. NON-NKP RESIDENTS HAVE TO
OBTAIN THEIR PASSES FROM GOVERNOR'S OFFICE IN NKP CAPITAL.
HE STATED THAT LAOTIANS COMING OVER TO THAI SIDE WILL HAVE
TO PRESENT BORDER PASS FROM LPDR AUTHORITY AND CAN ONLY
TRAVEL WITHIN CONFINES OF MUKDAHAN DISTRICT TOWN. DISTRICT
POLICE CHIEF INFORMED CONSUL THAT HE PLANS TO ESTABLISH
CHECKPOINTS ON ROADS LEADING OUT OF DISTRICT CAPITAL TO EN-
FORCE TRAVEL REGULATIONS SOR LAOTIAN VISITORS.

4. COMMENT: BOTH THAI IMMIGRATION AND CUSTOMS OFFICES IN
MUKDAHAN ARE OPEN, FULLY STAFFED AND READY FOR BUSINESS.
COPIES OF DEP MIN MOI CHOOSA-NGA'S OFFICIAL ORDER OPENING
BORDER POINT TOGETHER WITH NOTICES OUTLINING PROCEDURES FOR
TRAVEL TO SAVANNAKHET ARE DISPLAYED ON DOORS AND WINDOWS OF
BOTH OFFICES. A FEW THAI TRADERS FROM MUKDAHAN HAVE, IN
FACT, ALREADY BEGUN TO OPENLY CROSS MEKONG RIVER TO PEDDLE
THEIR WARES IN SAVANNAKHET. CONSUL STOOD WITH CHIEF IMMI-
GRATION OFFICER AT 1400 HRS ON VERANDA OF HIS OFFICE OVER-
LOOKING MEKONG RIVER AND WATCHED FIVE DUGOUT CANOES CARRYING
SUCH TRADERS RETURNING FROM LAO SIDE, ONLY TO BE INTERCEPTED
BY MROU PATROL BOAT AS THEY APPROACHED THAI SHORE. ASSISTANT
IMMIGRATION OFFICER STATED THAT HE EXPECTS THAI/LAO TRADE
TO BE CONDUCTED PRIMARILY ON A BARTER BASIS BECAUSE LAOTIAN
SUPPLY OF BAHT IS NOT EXPECTED TO BE GREAT AND THAI TRADERS
ARE NOT WILLING TO ACCEPT LIBERATION KIP IN PAYMENT FOR THAI
GOODS. SIGNED FINNEY UNQUOTE.
BURKE

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